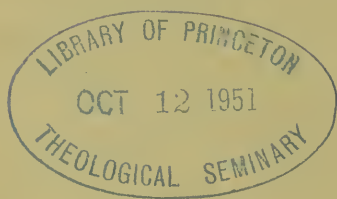


Islington, Eng.
Lower-Street Chapel

Introductory Discourse
On Occasion of the
Rev. Henry Marchmont
Being Publicly Recognized as
Pastor of the Church

Rev. T.W. Jenkyn

BX7178
.I8L9



BX7178
.I619

DEC 1 1920

RECOGNITION SERVICE

AT

LOWER STREET CHAPEL, ISLINGTON,

ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1848,

ON OCCASION OF THE

REV. HENRY MARCHMONT

(Late of Chester)

BEING PUBLICLY RECOGNISED AS PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.

After reading and Prayer, by the Rev. SAMUEL LUKE, (of Orange Street Chapel, late of Chester,) the following

Introductory Discourse

WAS DELIVERED BY THE

REV. T. W. JENKYN, D.D.,

(President of Coward College.)

My dear Christian friends in the church of Christ in Lower-street, Islington,—I call your attention, on this very interesting and solemn occasion, to that part of the Word of God which you will find in the twelfth chapter of St. Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians, at the former part of the thirteenth verse :—

“What is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches?”

The apostle Paul addressed this letter to the church at Corinth. He knew the state of all other Christian churches; he knew the principles on which they had been formed—he knew the various customs which they had observed, in their various congregational meetings; and he knew also the state of the church at Corinth, and the principles on which that church had been formed, and the customs which were observed on that church; and therefore, when writing his second epistle to them, after they had had some suspicions about his confidence in them, he says—“What is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you?”—clearly implying, that the only inferiority in Christian churches is when Christian churches do not properly support their ministers. The only inferiority in Christian churches is when any given church is inferior in liberality to the cause of Jesus Christ among them.

Now in the words which I have read to you this morning, we have a general principle, capable of being applied to any particular case, or to any particular church. As, for instance: if I had to deliver this discourse in Scotland, I should ask an Independent congregation—“What is it wherein ye are inferior to Presbyterian churches?” If I had to preach upon this subject in Canada, where our government has been pleased to establish Popery, I should say to a dissenting congregation—“What is it wherein ye are inferior to Popish churches?” But as I am now preaching to an English congregation, in England, I should be disposed to say to you, as a congregational people—“What is it wherein ye are inferior to the Church of England?”

Now the very fact of the apostle asking this question supposes, that except in liberality and generosity in the support of the ministry, the Corinthian church was equal, if not superior, to all other churches; but now I will take it upon the mere question of equality: “What is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches?” And I may perhaps be allowed to make two statements, before I enter immediately upon the answer to this question.

The first is, that whatever I shall say about the Church of England, I do

not mean to apply to any good men, to any faithful ministers, whom you know in the Church of England; but I mean to apply it to the system. Thus, if any persons were to come and deliver a lecture to you on the subject of peace, and were to dilate to you on the subject of war, they would expose to you all its atrocities; but then they would tell you that they did not mean to apply this to the men that were employed in the army or navy, but to the system. And it is to the system that I wish to apply all the remarks that I shall make this morning. I wish to "speak the truth in love;" and therefore I shall apply all my remarks to the system, and not at all to the men.

Another remark which I wished to make was, that I desire to appeal more directly to the young people of London and in this congregation—to the sons and the daughters of Dissenters; and therefore I wish to give them a distinct outline, and a well-defined outline, of dissenting and of nonconformist principles, so that they cannot possibly misunderstand them. I crave, then, the indulgence of my audience in general, and throw myself particularly in the hands of my Christian brethren who are here listening to me on this occasion.

Now I should like to apply myself to the question—"What is it wherein any Independent church is inferior to other churches?" You can apply this to any church you please; the Church of Scotland—the Church of Rome—the Greek Church—the Lutheran Church—the Reformed Church; and the remarks I shall make I should like you to apply to any given church whatever. And as members of this church I would ask you—"What is it wherein you are inferior to other churches?"

I. Is it in the right of private judgment? Is it in your deliberate conviction that you ought to obey the will of God, more than the will of men? This is the very first principle—that every man ought to obey the will of God, more than he obeys the will of man; this is the very foundation of all nonconformity. This is the very principle on which Daniel and the three Hebrew children acted, when they said they would not bow their knees to the image which Nebuchadnezzar had set up; this is the very principle on which the apostles separated themselves from the established religion of Judea; this is the very principle on which Luther and his coadjutors, and all the reformed churches, have separated themselves from the Church of Rome; this is the very principle on which you, as Congregationalists and Dissenters, claim a right to differ and to separate from all other people, and to decide for yourselves as to the will of God.

Now we have two distinct statements of this kind in the sacred Scriptures. In the fourth chapter of the Acts, and the nineteenth verse, you will find that the first ministers of religion had been called before magistrates—a priestly magistracy; and the people said to these priestly magistrates—"Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." What noble Nonconformists these were! They disputed the very right of these magistrates to interfere with them about the preaching of the Gospel and the ministrations of the truth. They appealed to their judges whether their laws or their enactments were right, and ought to be obeyed; and supposing that these priests and these magistrates might have a predilection in favour of their enactments, then they appealed from their judgment to the sight of God, and asked these judges and priests—"Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye?" This is the very foundation-stone of all nonconformity—the very foundation principle of all Protestantism—the very foundation of all dissent.

After these apostles and first ministers had been preaching in several places, they were brought before the magistrates as transgressors of their order; and therefore, in the fifth chapter of the Acts, and the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth verses, these magistrates and these priests said—"Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men." Here they would not promise to desist from preaching; they said that they owed allegiance to a higher authority than the authority of the priest and of the magistrate; they would not submit to human prohibitions. The priests and the magistrates said to them—"Did not we,"

the priests and the elders—"did not we," the very appointed committee of public instruction—"did not we straitly command that ye should not preach?" "Not only, we would not give you a licence to preach; but we forbid you to preach." "Yes," might Peter say, "you did order us; but did not I tell you. at the very same time, that God's authority was superior to yours?" Here, therefore, we find a band of noble Nonconformists, of spiritual heroes, who appealed to a maxim which the very laws of nature recognize, and which every human conscience approves; and they declared, that in the discharge of their duty towards God, towards the world, and towards a Christian church, they would not submit to magistrates, or to any priesthood whatever.

Now this is the very position which you occupy, and there are other churches acting precisely the same with you. And "what is it wherein ye are inferior to other churches?" Are you inferior to the Church of England? Why, the Church of England says that it differs from the Church of Rome; it professes to do so—though we might say to a good many in the Church of England, "They of Italy salute you." But they profess to be separate from the Church of Rome; and they claim the right of private opinion, to differ from the Lutheran Church, the Helvetic Confession, and all the other reformed churches. They claim the right to differ from the Established Church of Scotland; and you claim the right to differ from the Church of England. "What is it," then, "wherein ye are inferior to other churches?" You claim the right to differ from the Church of England—not from any disposition to schism, as it is called,—but you exercise your own right of judging of things according as you see them in the Word of God. Talk of schism, and being schismatical! why, there is no schism in the whole globe like the schism of the Church of England; there is no body more schismatic upon the face of the earth, than the clergy and the hierarchy of the Church of England. I should like to know—can you tell me?—with what body of Christians on the face of the entire globe the Church of England holds communion. It claims a right to separate from the Church of Rome; it has no communion whatever with the Lutheran Church, or the Helvetic Church, or the Church of Geneva, or the Church of Holland; so that if a real apostolic successor of Luther were to come here and ask to preach at any Episcopal Church in Islington, or in London, he would not be allowed to do it. This is bad enough; but it is not the worst. There are persons in America, who believe that episcopalianism is the right form of Church government; but if Bishop McIlvaine, or any other American bishop, were to come over to England, and want to preach in one of its episcopal churches, not one would give him a pulpit. But there is something more than that. There are bishops in Scotland—bishops made by the bishops of the Church of England; and yet if these bishops just cross the Tweed, and are invited by any congregation or church to come and preach in the Church of England, they dare not. And the episcopalian clergy of the Church of England dare not preach in America, in Scotland, or in Holland. Talk of being schismatical! talk of branding Dissenters as schismatics! why, this Church of England sect, this Parliamentary denomination in England, is the most sectarian and schismatical sect in the whole globe. Well, they claim the right to exercise private judgment, and by all means let us give it them—for liberty of conscience is not the liberty of my conscience, but the liberty of every man's conscience. But when these men call us schismatics, it is unworthy of them—it is base—it is wicked—it is unchristian. You also claim the right of private judgment, and are on an equality with every church. "What is it," then, "wherein ye are inferior to other churches?"

II. But, in the second place, is it in the authority to teach? Is it in the authority to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

This leads me to consider the second principle of nonconformity, namely, that every man who understands the will of God is authorised to teach it; every man who understands what his Maker wills concerning another man is authorised to teach it. This is evident from the instructions of Jesus Christ to His disciples: "Ye are the light of the world;" "ye are the salt of the earth." This involves every Christian. "No one lighteth a candle, and putteth it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that it may give light unto all that are in the house." There is a generality of application. Probably the apostles at one time seemed to hesitate about this; and when there was a good

man doing good in the name of Jesus Christ, they asked our Lord to forbid him, because he followed not with them—because he did not belong to their sect or denomination. But what did the Saviour of the world say? Why, He said—“Forbid him not.” Wherever you see a man concerned for the salvation of the souls of others, and for gathering them to Jesus Christ, do not forbid him, but bid him “God speed.” Therefore our Lord said—“Preach the Gospel to every creature;” “teach all nations.” Can you imagine any terms more comprehensive and more significative than these? But these instructions were not merely confined to apostles; for at the persecution which occurred at the stoning of Stephen, it is said that “they went everywhere preaching the Word;” but all the apostles, all the ministers, stayed at Jerusalem. Who gave the people authority to preach the Word? Who gave them licence to preach the Word? who gave them power to preach the Word? They went upon the principle of the instruction which they had first of all received from their Lord. They had a full heart and an open mouth; and they “went everywhere preaching the Word.” But besides this, in the fourteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, and the thirty-first verse, you will find what was the rule in the apostolic churches. It was this: “Ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all be comforted.” “Prophecy” here means, not to predict future events, but to explain the Scriptures, to explain the mind of God, to teach the will of God to others. Then every member of the Church of Christ has this right; and this epistle to the Corinthians was written, not to confirm the right—certainly not to forbid the right—but it was written just to regulate it, just to give directions how to apply it. All the primitive churches, then, like the church at Corinth, had a right to prophecy, a right to teach; for here Paul distinctly asserts, “Ye may all prophesy.” And he founds this assertion on God’s authority: “the things that I write unto you,” he says, “are the commandments of the Lord.” And he shows the use of this power in the Christian church: in order “that all may learn”—in order that others may understand—in order that others may prophesy, too—in order “that all may be comforted.” So that by being authorised to teach, I mean, that every man who knows the will of God is authorised to teach it; that he would contract guilt on his own soul, if he did not teach it—if he held back the truth of God in unrighteousness. Teach it; teach it at home—do not wait for a priest to come and teach his children; teach it in his family—teach it to his relatives—not leaving all that to a priest; teach it to his own immediate neighbourhood—so that if, in the providence of God, he were located in any place where darkness, gross darkness, covered the people, he himself, though perhaps a merchant of London, might there make himself a minister of Christ, and teach the neighbourhood there what the will of God is. This is the principle upon which all our young men enter the ministry; and this is the principle recognized in the Church of England. When a Church of England candidate presents himself to the bishop, he is obliged to swear, that he has been “moved by the Holy Ghost.” Now independently of all the conversation that has taken place about this boy getting into the ministry, this or that living being in the family, and a desire to confer it on this boy—we will suppose all the reality and spirituality of this oath, that the lad is “moved by the Holy Ghost” to undertake the ministration of the truth. This he swears, and he enters on this very principle. And is not this the very principle on which our noble-hearted young men enter the ministry, as Dissenters? They are “moved by the Holy Ghost;” they tell you that the Holy Spirit has been affecting their minds—they tell you of the shedding abroad of that Spirit in their own hearts—they tell you, after they felt all these things in their own hearts, how they were led to pity others who were without the knowledge of Christ, and how they were led to

—“tell to sinners round
What a great Saviour they had found.”

They tell this to the pastor and officers of the church, and to the church itself; they were “moved by the Holy Ghost.” “What is it,” then, “wherein ye are inferior to other churches?” You have had the same suggestion, the same influence, and the same power of the Holy Ghost, to induce you to enter the ministry.

III. Is it in the principles of your congregational constitution?

Here let me again lead you to consider, that every congregation gathered together by such a teacher as I have just supposed to be authorised, and formed into a society for mutual improvement in religion, is a Church of Jesus Christ; and therefore, on this principle, you are, to all intents and purposes, a real Church of Jesus Christ. It is not the administration of ordinances that makes you a church, because you must be a church before you have these ordinances; it is not an adequate and a full supply of Christian officers that makes you a Church, because you must be a church before you have officers. What is a church, then? It is, in the language of the Church of England, "a congregation of faithful men"—an assembly of people formed according to the spiritual nature of the kingdom of Jesus Christ—formed to hold forth Christ, by doctrine, by devotion and by discipline, and formed for mutual edification and instruction in Christian graces and in Christian duties. Every congregation thus gathered together is a Church of Jesus Christ. I cannot enlarge upon this; but you will at once see that it was the custom of the apostles, that whenever they converted any, they always brought them together and formed them into a church. I think that we Congregationalists sometimes go wrong in thinking that no church should be gathered together, unless it be a large and respectable church; the apostles gathered together a little swarm in a hive, wherever they could, and let them enlarge themselves. Here, therefore, we learn, that every congregation gathered together in such a manner was a Church of Christ; and on this account "the church" is always a distinct congregation, and not a host of congregations gathered together—as under the name of the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, or the Church of America,—but each was an independent church, and capable of arranging its own affairs. Now just look at the constitution of the Church of England, and you will find that it is utterly impossible for its members to obey the laws of Jesus Christ. In Matthew xviii. 15, 16, you will read these words: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." That they can do. "If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church." How is a member of the Church of England to do that? If a member of the Church of England has a misunderstanding or a quarrel with another member, he must take all these steps, and at last he must go and "tell it to the church." What is he to do? What would he do in Islington? Is he to call a vestry meeting and tell it? That would not be telling it to the church. Is he to go to an Ecclesiastical Court and tell it? Is he to go to the House of Lords and tell it? Is he to go to the Queen's Council and tell it? It is utterly impossible; and therefore the constitution of the Church of England renders it entirely impracticable that any one of its members could ever obey this cardinal precept of Jesus Christ. But you can obey it; you have practised it. "What is it," then, "wherein ye are inferior to other churches?" Not a whit are you behind them all.

IV. But again: is it in the call which was given to the preachers, to minister to these congregations which they had gathered?

This leads me to another consideration, namely, that the invitation given to such a teacher to administer to them the ordinances of Christ regularly, is a legitimate call to the office of a pastor. Jesus Christ "when He ascended up on high, gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." They are teachers by the authority of Jesus Christ, but they are pastors by the authority of the church. I do not believe in the doctrine which was asserted by some of our young men, some seven years ago, that all their authority was received from the church; no, I believe that the ministry is received from the Lord Jesus, but the pastorship is received from the church. Jesus Christ has authorised every man to be a teacher; but he is my teacher, only by my own choice, by my own will, and by my own sanction. And in order to show how the ministry differs from the pastoral office, consider for an instant. No man in a Christian church would say, 'I believe I am called of God to be a deacon;' but any man might say, 'I believe I am called of God to be a minister—to be a preacher;' he has received his ministry from the Lord Jesus. But nevertheless, his au-

thority to teach any given church is received from that church, and from that church alone. Let me illustrate this by a very few considerations, to show that the choice of officers is altogether vested in the church. For instance: the members of a church, however small in number they may be, are the best judges of who will suit them. Why, even in England all men are deemed the best judges to choose who shall teach them in the sciences, and in the arts, and in the schools, and in seminaries of literature; however difficult the case of bodily ailment may be, every man has a right to choose his own physician; and however intricate his affairs may be, the English Constitution supposes that he may choose his own lawyer; and beyond all this, it supposes that peasants and artisans may choose their own senators, the very makers of the law; but worst of all, the Church of England supposes, that although men can select their own physicians, to take care of their bodies—although they can select their own lawyers, to manage their own temporal affairs—although they can select their own senators, to make their laws—they cannot choose their own minister, their own pastor, their own clergyman. Now is this right? You know well, that in all this you are not “inferior to other churches.” How does the minister of the church of England get introduced there? He must get what is called a title. He must get some friendly clergyman to let him read prayers for a given time. That is his title to enter the ministry. And not only so, but even a bishop must get an election or consecration. But how is all this? Why, the late affair in our own city throws so much light upon all the legerdemain of making men clergymen and bishops, that it is almost an insult to ask an intelligent church like that of Islington—“What is it wherein ye are inferior to Bow Church”—what is it wherein ye are inferior to St. James’s, Piccadilly—in the choice of your minister, and in the choice of your bishop?

V. In the next place, the public announcement of such an invitation, by the lifting up of the hands of the members of the church, and where attainable, by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, is to all intents and purposes a valid ordination.

“What is it,” then, “wherein ye are inferior?” In the validity of ordination? Not at all; for you will find, if you read the Scriptures, that ordination in the Scriptures means the suffrages of the church. And what is an ordination? A public expression of the choice of a church, accompanied with the devotional services of prayer, fasting, and imposition of hands by the presbytery. Upon this question I feel I cannot possibly enlarge; but we are gathered together here to-day, as a presbytery, to witness your solemnities. We have come, however, by your invitation; we claim no right to be here. On this occasion the presbytery is present, not to overturn the suffrages of the church, but by your invitation to receive them. We come here, not to give authority to our beloved brother Mr. Marchmont to administer the ordinances; his authority is derived from Christ alone; but his authority to administer them to you is derived from you alone. If, however, the Church of England professes to communicate anything in this particular, there we confess our inferiority. But what is it that the Church of England Bishops convey? Is it anything like animal magnetism? Is it anything like the mesmeric touch, by which an ecclesiastic can throw a young candidate into an ecclesiastical state, by touching his religious or ecclesiastical organs? But is it true? If we thought there was any reality in it, we might as well put in for a share of it. Were not our Puritan forefathers ordained by episcopalian bishops?—and therefore, unless we have sadly degenerated, whatever came from the episcopal touch upon the heads of our Puritan and Nonconformist forefathers has not, perhaps, altogether escaped from their dissenting successors. But this jugglery, this legerdemain, of making a man a clergyman by the touch of a bishop’s hand, I cannot conceive of anything similar to it, except that of consecrating burial-grounds. That Englishmen, who are the disciples of Locke’s Philosophy and Bacon’s Experimental Philosophy, could believe that any change is made in any three acres of ground, by a bishop, from his hand or from a shovel, scattering some soil which he has received from a previously consecrated ground, and making such a difference in the soil that a dissenting minister could not officiate on it; that Englishmen should believe this, and act upon this, is to me utterly unintelligible.

VI. I had some other thoughts here, such as that a pastor ordained by a dissenting congregation is, to all intents and purposes, a New Testament bishop; but I would proceed to consider, that a church, a bishop, thus consecrated, as you in Islington, are, to all intents and purposes, as to influence and authority, independent of all other churches and of all other bishops.

Only think of it—that there is no power in England, no power in Europe, no power in the universe, that could make you form yourselves into a church; consequently, no power in England, no power in Europe, no power in the world, could make you receive any officers which you were not willing to receive. Now you are independent. But by independent we mean, that other churches cannot interfere with you. The church in Claremont chapel cannot interfere with you—the church in Union chapel cannot interfere with you. You are perfectly independent in doctrine; and I hope my dear brother will have an opportunity of stating his doctrine in his own terms, and not in any form of expression dictated by any man. We want a little more intellectual liberty in this way, even among dissenters, because I have found, (especially since I came to London,) that our churches and ministers have their thirty-nine articles, and that if any brother happens to have but thirty-eight, or if he happens to have forty, he is looked upon with suspicion; but I hope my dear brother will assert his noble independence, and preach his doctrine in his own way. And neither can anybody palm upon you any form of devotion. You can conduct your devotional exercises in any way you like; nobody can tell you that you ought to pray in this way, or praise in another way. I am sorry to find, that among many ministers, and perhaps members of churches, there is a disposition to favour a liturgy. A liturgy!—why, there was nothing of the kind in the early history of the Christian church. Paul instructs his son Timothy to tell men how to pray “for kings and for all in authority.” If there had been such a thing as a form of prayer, he would never have given that direction. ‘But,’ some dissenters say, ‘they have such beautiful prayers, such a beautiful Liturgy, such a beautiful service, in the church of England.’ Beautiful! has God ever promised to answer beautiful prayers? Is “beauty” ever applied to prayer in the sacred Scriptures? When a beggar comes to your door, will you ever give him anything merely because he makes a beautiful prayer? When you send a petition to the House of Commons, will it be granted because it is such a beautiful prayer? And when a poor prisoner in Newgate sends a petition for a reprieve, will the monarch ever grant it, because it is such a beautiful prayer? Beautiful! and where are all these beauties? Have you never experienced what you call beauty, in an extemporaneous expression of a mind and a heart wrestling with God? Beauty! do you never regard that as the worst of all epithets which can be applied to the prayer of a man wrestling with God for the blessing which he needs? And not only in devotion, but also in discipline you are perfectly independent. In the churches at Corinth and Galatia, for instance, there were great doctrinal errors—they were not sound in the faith; but no church thought of interfering—the apostle addressed them in a letter. The church at Antioch was shown to be independent of the church at Jerusalem, and the church at Jerusalem was independent of the church at Antioch—they never thought of interfering with each other’s discipline or doctrine; and therefore it is quite apparent, that every church is independent of all other churches.

VII. But finally, every such Christian church, gathered together by such a minister, is perfectly distinct and separate from the political and religious constitution of the nation or state in which it is formed.

“What is it,” then, “wherein ye are inferior to other churches?” The union of the church and state is completely forbidden by one declaration of our Saviour—“My kingdom is not of this world.” A heathen monarch has no power at all to interfere with religion. Only put the question to yourselves: how is it, for instance, that the Queen of Madagascar has no power nor authority to interfere with Christian churches there? But suppose the Queen of Madagascar (or any other country) were to become Christian, would she have power then? And supposing a king and a queen—(we have our king and queen, and the Wesleyans have their king and queen joining their churches)—supposing they were to become members of a Christian church, would that church thereby acquire any new power? You see at once that a king becoming a member of a church is only like a constable or a magistrate

becoming a member of a church; they derive no new power from it, and they confer no new power upon the church to which they attach themselves. 'Ah! but,' you say, 'is there not a passage in the Bible, where it says that kings and queens are to become "nursing fathers and nursing mothers" to the church of God?' Yes, and we wish them to become such—by their own personal influence, by the principles on which they carry on their legislation, and by the force of their example. A constable ought to nurse the church of Christ—but not by his club; a soldier ought to nurse the church of Christ—but not by his sword; a king or a queen ought to foster the church of Christ—but not by his sceptre. "Nursing fathers and nursing mothers" they ought to be; but we wish them not to get above their business. By all means let them be nurses, but not heads of the household. Let them become nurses; but let them obey the laws of the family, and not make any new laws. Let them become nurses; but let them nurse all the children, without being the fondlers of some and the opposers of others. What would you think if a nurse in your family were to select perhaps a boy and a girl—let it be Harry or Charles, or Elizabeth or Mary, and make all the other children in the family pay tithe of pocket money to Harry and Elizabeth, as their right, in order that they may have all kinds of indulgences and immunities? Is that nursing? Well, then, you see this would not do in your own family; neither would it do in the church of Christ. Therefore let kings and queens be merely "nursing fathers and nursing mothers" to the cause of Christ, and no more.

Let me be indulged with just three words in conclusion.

You have seen that in nothing are you "inferior to other churches;" therefore, when by the providence of God you acquire a competency, and go to live in some retired hamlet—or when, in your summer visits, you go to some watering-place, oh! remember there that in nothing are you "inferior to other churches." Why is it that dissenters—why is that dissenting ministers, when they go to watering-places, take seats in Church-of-England places, while there is, perhaps, a respected or a beloved brother in that retired district, struggling against all the opposition of the squirearchy and hierarchy of the Church of England? Maintain your principles, and honour them, wherever you are. But some London dissenters will say, 'We cannot get any good there.' Why do you go to the Church of England, then? Do you get any good there? I firmly believe, that if, when you came home, you were to hear such sermons as you hear there, you would very soon wish your minister to retire. Are you such "babes in Christ?" Let me suppose that you do not *get* any good there; go there and *do* good. There is a brother struggling in that watering-place against all the influence of Church and State, and maintaining his Congregational principles, and the principles of Jesus Christ. Then go there and do good; you will animate that brother who is preaching in that place; you will strengthen that weak congregation which is gathered together there. "What is it," then, "wherein ye are inferior to other churches?"

And you children of dissenters, study these principles; read all the books connected with them, and make yourselves masters of them, and never leave them, never forsake them; assert these noble principles, which make you inferior to no churches whatever. Sabbath-school teachers, teach these principles. Verily, we have been guilty for the last fifty years in this particular; we have been zealous—we have been quixotic—in teaching them the truths of Christianity, without teaching them the principles of Nonconformity. Teach, then, those principles to your children.

Finally, young ministers, let me just address a word to you. Maintain these principles; teach them to others; abide by them as long as you live. Some of you, perhaps, are young men who had at first been intended to be trained for a business, and had the avenue for usefulness and wealth before you; but you gave yourselves up to the work of the ministry—to teach the noble principles of the New Testament. I welcome you with all my heart, and God will not forsake you. But among you there is another band—the band of the sons of dissenting ministers. My dear brethren, I would say to you, "All hail!" You have seen your father struggling with poverty, struggling with obscurity, struggling with the scorn of the clergyman, struggling with the contempt of the squire—struggling to maintain these noble principles in the village or

the town in which you were born. And oh! you have seen and you have felt all this; and yet you have thrown yourselves into the noble course of continuing in the career of your father. You do not see the tears of your mother; you do not witness that gentle economy, with which she tried to save the feelings of your father, by striving to make both ends meet with what dissenters call a salary, but what every one else calls a pittance. But, my dear young brethren, I congratulate you on your noble disinterestedness, in throwing yourselves into that noble and glorious work of maintaining that the principles of Congregationalism are "not inferior" to those of any other church upon earth.

May God bless these hints, for Christ's sake!

The Rev. Dr. HENDERSON (of Highbury College) then put the usual questions, which were answered by Mr. MARCHMONT; and, after the Designation Prayer, by the Rev. T. LEWIS (of Union Chapel), the following

Charge to the Minister

WAS DELIVERED BY THE

REV. THOMAS RAFFLES, DD., LL.D.,

(Of Liverpool.)

"Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed."—2 Cor. vi. 3.

It was an eulogium pronounced by our blessed Lord upon John the Baptist, that "among those that were born of women there had not yet arisen a greater than he;" and yet He declared, that "the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than the Baptist." How great, then, was the apostle Paul, who though in his own estimation "less than the least of all saints," was nevertheless "the chief of the apostles;" in zeal, in devotedness, in labour, in suffering, in sacrifice, in privation, in efficiency and in success, surpassing and transcending them all! Among all the names that adorn the page of history, ancient or modern, sacred or profane, next to that of his great Master, there are none that shine with a brighter, purer lustre than his own. Of the noble elements that compose his character, any one were of itself sufficient to impart real greatness. What an illustration, then, of the true sublime, is the combination of them all! And how impressive is the spectacle—to see them all concentrated, fixed, absorbed by one great object, one momentous question—simply one—but that one the best, the brightest, the noblest that can excite or occupy the powers of the human mind, namely, the glory of God in the salvation of the souls of men!

The apostle Paul was a man of one end, and one aim, and one occupation; "one thing," said he "I do"—and he thought, and felt, and cared, and toiled, and laboured, and prayed for nothing else; and that was, that he might "finish" his apostolic "course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus." All he suffered and all he sacrificed had this end in view. If he "endured all things," it was "for the elect's sake, that they might be saved;" if he "could even wish that himself were accursed from Christ," it was "for his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh;" if he became "all things to all men," it was "that he might win some" to their souls' salvation; if he strove to "maintain a conscience void of offence toward God and man"—if he "crucified the flesh," and "mortified his members," that he might "give no offence in anything," it was "that the ministry might not be blamed," nor his usefulness be thereby impeded, but that he might in all things approve himself as a minister of God.

You, my brother, have requested me to deliver to you a charge on this solemn occasion—to address to you some admonitions and counsels, some di-

rections and encouragements, adapted to the position in which you now stand. I can truly say, that I painfully feel the difficulty and the delicacy of attempting to do so. Well acquainted as you are with all that appertains to the Christian ministry, familiarised as you have been, by years of experience, with its toils, its anxieties, its responsibilities—what can I say to you, that you do not already know? what can I suggest to you, that you have not pondered again, and again, and again? But listen to this extraordinary man; hear the rapid sketch which he gives in this passage of his life and of his labours. That shall be your charge: most solemn—most impressive—and withal, inspired! The admonition suited to your present position shall be drawn from that! Happy for you, if in any measure, to any extent, with any degree of success, you may be enabled to imitate his example and follow in his steps! “Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed: but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.” What a catalogue! It would occupy days, and fill volumes, to expound it all. What a chequered scene! What a full cup! What a baptism of suffering and sorrow! Yet he was willing—yea, he was eager, anxious, thankful—to endure it all, to realise it all—“that the ministry might not be blamed,” that its efficiency might not be impaired, that all its great ends might be accomplished, and souls won, by his honoured instrumentality, to Christ.

Let this great apostle, my brother, be your example. Study his character, with profound attention and earnest devotion; let his leading features distinguish yourself; seek to be imbued with the same spirit—to be impelled by the same motives; let the love of Christ and the love of souls constrain you, as they constrained him. That will render every burden light, and every bitter sweet; that will make the crooked straight and the rough places plain; that will elevate you above the love of life and the fear of death; that will bear you upwards and onwards, in the prosecution of your work, so that its very toils shall be your rest, its labours your repose, till at length, having “fought the good fight, and finished your course, and kept the faith,” your brow shall be adorned with the imperishable wreath and the unfading diadem.

But till then, (and for the sake of the church, I would earnestly desire that that may be a distant day,) let me commend to you the apostolic plan, and the principles upon which the apostle proceeded in the prosecution of his work: “giving no offence in anything,” he says, “that the ministry be not blamed.”

You will observe in these words—the conduct the apostle adopted, and the motive by which he was influenced. His conduct was such as not to give offence in anything; and his motive was, that the ministry might be free from blame.

I. First, then, let us direct our attention to the line of conduct which the apostle adopted. He states it in the negative; he says, “giving no offence.” Reverse it, and it is—prudently, cautiously, circumspectly, diligently, devotionally, and in every way suited to his high calling, his apostolic office, his ministerial work: thus he conducted himself, and pursued his course through a long and laborious life, until at length he “finished that course with joy.”

Now inasmuch as the work of the ministry and the care of the churches is committed to us, our position and our responsibilities resemble his; and so must our conduct also, if we would like him realise the great end of our ministry, and secure the Master’s approbation and promised reward.

In looking through the articles which the apostle enumerates, as constituting the circumstances in which he was placed, and the line of conduct which he adopted, I select out of many the following: prudence—diligence—patience—prayer.

1. First, prudence.

We place prudence first, because of its vast importance to the usefulness of a minister and the success of his ministry. That piety is an essential requisite to the Christian ministry, we must never cease to affirm and insist; and piety, too, of a superior order. In all that we are about to say, we assume and take for granted its actual presence and habitual influence. But though all other qualifications in the ministry be vain and worthless without this—even this, together with all others, in whatever degree they might exist, would be to a large extent neutralized, in their influence and in their effect, by the want of prudence. And it seems to me that this is a prominent idea intended to be conveyed by the apostle, in the passage before us; for the word here rendered “offence” literally signifies (as you know) “a cause of stumbling;” and is at once significative of those words, and those actions, and those tempers, which being thoughtlessly, recklessly, imprudently uttered, written, done, displayed, are absolutely unfit for the character of a minister and highly calculated to injure his ministry, by exciting suspicion, aversion and disgust.

Prudence is a virtue not very easily defined; yet men are easily aware of its absence, and they will promptly discover its reverse. It assumes different forms, it acquires different names, according to the aspects in which it is contemplated and the scenes and circumstances in which it is to be displayed. Sometimes it is a keen and quick sense of propriety, according to the position which the man occupies and the duties which he is called to discharge; sometimes it is tact and skill in the management of a delicate and difficult affair; sometimes it is that undefinable thing designated “common sense,” and which, if I may be permitted to say so with all gravity, I have often been tempted to think the most uncommon sense of all, and from the absence of which all other kinds of sense, though possessed in a high degree, have been of little utility to their possessor; sometimes it is presence of mind—or if presence of mind and prudence be not, strictly speaking, the same thing, the former is essential to the exercise of the latter—and the man to act, to speak, to conduct himself with prudence, must have all his mental powers and moral feelings awake and ready to serve him, as the case may be, or the emergency requires. I imagine that men of business understand all this perfectly well; they are fully aware of its vast importance in their commercial transactions and concerns, and that it is only by the practical exhibition of it, at the Exchange or the Market, that they can amass wealth, on the one hand, or save themselves from loss and ruin, on the other.

But in what scene of life, my brother—in what series of engagements—in what circle of action and of influence—can prudence be of higher moment, than in those connected with the Christian ministry? Behold the man!—the minister—the preacher—the pastor! How many eyes are fixed upon him! how many ears are open, to listen to reports respecting him!—eyes and ears of which he is himself unconscious—most intent, perhaps, when he is least aware—best prepared when he may be least upon his guard; eagle eyes,—hawks’ eyes, argus’ eyes; ears that can catch the slightest whisper, and eyes that can penetrate into the deepest retirement! Oh! let him not think that he is ever alone, even with regard to his fellow-men; at any moment the intruder may be at hand, and there are “birds of the air” always ready to “carry the matter.”

The prudent minister, then, will be so in his speech; he will “set a watch upon the door of his lips, that he speak not unadvisedly with his tongue;” he will forbear the hasty expression, the rash design, the railing accusation, the biting sarcasm, the slanderous report; not less will he forbear the idle word, the foolish jest, the language of buffoonery and folly—for such words are sure to “give offence,” and on their account “the ministry” will be “blamed.” There was a time, indeed, when such buffoonery was more than tolerated, even in the pulpit—this “foolish jesting” was not deemed inappropriate to that most sacred place, on the most solemn occasions. But those times are happily gone by, never to return; and the men that were wont, by such methods, to draw large congregations then, would, I apprehend, with a very few (if any) exceptions, be left to preach to empty pews and benches now. And so it ought to be.

But if he would so conduct himself “that the ministry be not blamed,” the same prudence must mark every action of his life, every production of his

pen, as well as every word of his tongue—every work of his hand, as well as every sentence that falls from his lips. What an unhappy talent some men have for writing caustic and cutting letters, which with more of feeling than of thought are promptly sent upon their errands of mischief!—and thus angry and petulant emotions, which otherwise, perhaps, would have passed away and been forgotten with the occasions which excited them, have been embodied in enduring records, and remain a source of lasting evils. Such a talent is by no means an enviable acquisition for a Christian minister; and where it does exist, and is productive, prudence will dictate, at any rate, a second or a third perusal—a reconsideration of these productions, and that too after a night of restored calmness to the mind; and then, perhaps, in most cases, the mischief which these notes are calculated to accomplish would be avoided, by their committal to the flames. And oh! the pure, the elevated satisfaction every such victory obtained over a man's own spirit must yield!—for “better is he that ruleth his own spirit, than he that taketh a city.”

And may I be permitted to observe, that great blame is also attached to the ministry, by the circumstance that the minister has stepped beyond the line of his ministerial avocations, and intermeddled with matters not properly belonging to him. Some have given offence by unduly prying into private and domestic matters, by obtruding at hours which are not convenient, and by giving their opinion when it is not required. Some have given offence by meddling with that office in the church which being not spiritual, but secular, has been wisely left to other hands than his. If he is left without interference to provide for the spiritualities of the church, he may surely leave its temporalities with them. There is scope enough in the pulpit, and all that appertains to it, for the pastor; the “serving of tables,” in all its departments, belongs to the deacons, and may well be left exclusively to them. Some have given offence and damaged their ministerial character and usefulness, by an unhappy propensity to undertake the management of mere temporal affairs and secular trusts. Instead of saying, when solicited to this end—“Who made me a ruler and a judge,” to distribute property and to divide inheritances?—they have undertaken executorships, trusteeships, guardianships, and I know not what responsibilities of that kind, which have caused such an occupation of time, and such an absorption of thought, as have seriously interfered with the duties of their ministry; and still worse, their mode of administration has sometimes been such as, whether right or wrong, to induce in some quarters serious dissatisfaction, and in those quarters at least greatly to damage the reputation of the ministry, and materially to impede its efficiency and success. While if there be one, who, in this age of reckless mercantile speculation and commercial gambling, is tempted to combine with the profession of a minister of the Gospel that of a sharebroker or stockjobber, it will be a miracle indeed if neither he nor his ministry suffer blame. With temporal affairs and monetary affairs a man must have more or less to do; but surely a minister will have as little to do with them as possible. “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.” He will find in the warfare in which he is engaged, a sufficient occupation for all his energies, without the adoption of additional incumbrance; and happy is that minister, who with his mind entirely given to his work, is placed by his people above the reach of such temptations.

2. Secondly, another important article in the line of conduct adopted by the apostle, is diligence.

He “laboured more abundantly than they all;” and it is given as a proof of his diligence in the work of the ministry, that “from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum”—including (as you know) Arabia, Syria, Greece, the Grecian Isles, Thessaly, Macedonia, and indeed the greater part of the then known world—he had “fully preached the Gospel of Christ.” And although the sphere of our labours, my brother, be of a far more contracted kind, and neither the travels of even a Whitfield or a Wesley are assigned to us, still I can conceive of no occupation requiring more of diligence, than that of a pastor of a Christian church, and a preacher of the Gospel. What diligence in the study! what diligence in the pulpit! what diligence in the class! what diligence in the chamber of disease! what diligence in the committee-room! what diligence in the social circle! what diligence with the head, and

with the heart, and with the hand, and with the feet, and with the mind, and with the tongue, and with the pen! what diligence everywhere and at all times—in all ways and by all means—if he would make “full proof of his ministry,” if he would “approve himself both to God and man, a workman not needing to be ashamed,” and so conducting himself as not to give occasion of offence in anything—neither by his failure nor by his delinquency expose the ministry to blame!

What a close student he must be—if he would keep pace with an advancing age, and maintain a freshness and a variety in his ministrations! A man of ordinary powers and of common diligence may produce a few elaborate discourses, and astonish his hearers with the splendour or the research of occasional addresses from the pulpit or the platform; a man may sustain an average reputation for a year or two, and make a respectable appearance in public for a limited period; but he is a skilful workman, and his must be diligence—diligence of no ordinary kind—who Sabbath after Sabbath, month after month, year after year, through a long life spent in the same pastoral charge, maintains an efficient ministry, and still brings forth from the treasure of his richly-stored and well-replenished mind “things new and old.”

What diligence in the pulpit—so as to occupy his accustomed place with punctuality and constancy, as often as the hour of worship recurs; and that not only in the more public services of the Sabbath, but also in those minor and more social services which the edification of the church may require!

What diligence in the training of the young, and providing for them, as they rise up into life, by means of the Sabbath school, or the Bible class, or any other method which the Christian student may suggest—affording that instruction which their tender minds may receive, or their maturer minds may demand; so that the children which the church has reared may in the next generation become the hand of its bounty and the arm of its strength!

What diligence, by personal inspection and pastoral visitation, first to know the real state of the flock, and then suitably to minister to its requirements—to warn, to reprove, and to rebuke, no less than to cheer, to encourage, and to direct—with all long-suffering and forbearance!

What diligence and devotedness in the visitation of the sick, the afflicted and the dying! What diligence in teaching and preaching from house to house—not in affected solemnity or rigid formality, but with warnings, and admonitions, and remonstrances, and encouragements, and prayers, which flow from the heart, the seat of mingled fidelity and love! All this were surely enough, and more than enough, fully to occupy the time and employ the energies of a man of more than ordinary powers of body and mind.

But we have work to do of which our fathers knew nothing, and which is above and beyond that which properly belongs to the pastoral office. In their days there were no Missionary societies, home or foreign—no Bible societies—no Tract societies—no Town or City Missions—no Sunday schools—no Infant schools—no Adult schools—no Ragged schools, and I know not what other institutions that characterize the present day, and open up scenes for laborious occupation to our pastors and ministers of the Gospel—any one of which might of itself supply ample employment for any little leisure which they could reasonably be supposed to have at their command. And in truth, my dear Sir, it is anything but what might be regarded as an amusement or recreation of the mind, which such societies present to those who stand officially connected with them. Most grave, and weighty, and solemn and momentous are their affairs, and deep, and constant and anxious the attention they demand; and more especially in the present day, when hundreds of eyes are upon them, and such is the jealousy that prevails, and so intent are men upon keeping them up to their mark in all things, that it is even proposed to found institutions for the express purpose of watching their movements, and detecting and exposing their failures and defects. And to whom is the management of these great and noble institutions to be committed? Exclusively to laymen? I apprehend that they would scarcely be willing exclusively to undertake the charge; but would they regard the ministry as free from blame, if we suffered it so to be? At any rate, such I think would be the case if an arrangement of that kind were proposed in the provinces; you may, however, have a larger proportion of laymen imbued with public spirit and adapted to the purpose in the metropolis.

Look, then, at the rapid sketch which we have given of the various labours which devolve upon the Christian minister; and add to these the many other accidental employments, not usually contemplated and hardly to be described, yet of constant occurrence, and think what must be the diligence of the man who, in the midst of all these, would not, by the neglect of anything important, give offence, or expose the ministry to blame.

3. The third particular specified is patience. And this is in the superlative degree: "in much patience."

Every representation given of our character in the New Testament only confirms and enforces the necessity there is for a large measure of this Christian grace. We are soldiers, leaders, commanders, in the army of the living God; and we must have patience, if we would fight the fight, so as to obtain the victory and receive the crown. We are husbandmen; and the husbandman must "wait for the precious fruits of the earth, and have long patience, until he receive the early and latter rain." None of our ministerial avocations must be performed with rash impetuosity, or conducted with indecent haste.

What patience there must be in the study—in reading, and meditation, and prayer! What deep thought! what close investigation! what patient analysis, to ascertain and to exhibit, to the satisfaction of our own minds and the apprehension and edification of our people, the correct meaning of doubtful and difficult passages of Scripture!

What patience and deliberation and caution, in dealing with cases of conscience, whether in the pulpit or in the parlour, so as in no instance to mislead, and by some fatal error, some unhappy misdirection, be the occasion of results disastrous in their character, and pregnant with serious damage to the ministry!

What patience, and prudence, and tenderness, and endurance, in the visitation of the sick, the afflicted, the bereaved, the distressed! How must we endure the prolixity of grief—the tediousness of sorrow! How must we bend down the listening ear when the voice is feeble, and wait where there is difficulty or reluctance to communicate! In how many cases would restlessness, or apparent impatience, on our parts, seal the lips of the sufferer, and prevent that composure and confidence without which it is impossible to administer rightly the counsel or the instruction which the occasion requires!

Oh! what patience does it require with timid disciples, with young and inexperienced converts—ay, and even with the gainsayers and those that oppose themselves! What patient investigation—what minute inquiry, to ascertain the real character, the true condition, of such as come to us for advice, and in states of mind almost endlessly diversified propose to us the question—"What must I do to be saved?" That question, my brother, it will delight you to hear; but, at the same time, you well know that no part of your ministry involves a deeper and a more intense anxiety, than the dealing with such a question in private conference with one, whose mind is fully awake to its paramount and infinite importance.

And as you must have "much patience" in the prosecution of your work, so also you must exercise "much patience" with regard to the success and the recompence of your labours. You must not expect to be able to thrust in the sickle so soon as you have sown the seed, nor to receive your wages so soon as you commence your work. I know that you will look for your reward in your work; I know that souls, converted to God through your honoured instrumentality, are the wages you expect; and though success is to be neither the motive nor the measure of your work, still you will long for it with ardent desire, and you will derive from it no small degree of encouragement and enjoyment. Nevertheless, "though Israel be not gathered," yet shall we, if found faithful, be "glorious in the eyes of the Lord;" and though men sink into perdition from under our ministry, yet will that ministry be free from blame, and ourselves shall be "a sweet savour of God," even "in them that perish."

We must exercise patience, then, and in us, as well as in our people, patience must "have her perfect work." Indeed, it behoves us in this, as well as in all other Christian graces, to be examples to the flock. We must pursue our course with an undeviating, untiring perseverance; for perseverance (as you are aware) enters into the meaning of the word which the apostle here employs—patience and perseverance are combined in the meaning of that word.

We must perform our duties, and leave results, events and consequences to God; His approbation and the testimony of conscience should maintain their seat, while we think it "a small thing" to be judged of our fellow-men. The opinion of wise, judicious and prudent men we should treat with respect,—and it is hard to conceive of a case in which those opinions shall materially differ from the verdict of an enlightened conscience, or the testimony of the Word of God; but the conflicting opinions of the hasty, the prejudiced or the ill-informed, should never affect us, nor induce us for a moment to seek, for the sake of meeting their views and thus securing their favour, to depart from the course which Scripture directs and conscience approves. We are the "servants" of our people, it is true; but then it is "for Jesus' sake." We are His servants, in a far higher sense than we are theirs; and it is to Him, and not to them, that we must look for our condemnation or our crown.

In the time of trial, then—in the midst of disappointment, vexation and grief—when the answer to prayer and the fruit of labour seems long delayed—when one and another, of whom we had augured well, is "as the morning cloud and the early dew"—when "hope deferred" has well-nigh "made the heart sick," and with the prophet we have been ready to exclaim, "Who hath believed our report?"—oh! then let us "in patience possess our souls," and remembering that our work is with our God, that our witness is above, that our record is on high, let us wait the disclosures and the decisions of another day, and "endure as seeing Him who is invisible."

4. Finally, prayer.

It is true, the apostle does not distinctly name it; prayer, as such, is not included in the catalogue, except it be comprehended in the "watchings and fastings," of which he speaks—as I apprehend it is; but he was so pre-eminently a man of prayer, he laid so much stress continually on the importance of prayer, he so earnestly sought it at the hands of his brethren on his behalf, and it is so important a thing for us, that it would have been a capital omission not to have named it here. What comfort or success have we a right to expect in our ministry, without prayer? Can you command an influence which can alike comfort and edify the saint, without it? You may have learning, eloquence, erudition—you may have talents, and preach splendid sermons—you may be highly intellectual, or profoundly metaphysical—you may rise, and advance, and keep pace with the age—you may be fully up to the requirements of the times, and in the judgment of wise and pious men yours may be exactly the kind of ministry we want—ay, and it may be a laborious ministry, and all that the combined and concentrated excellencies of all the distinguished ministers that ever blessed the church or the world could make it; but if the Spirit be not poured upon you from on high, it would be all in vain. And "the residue of the Spirit is with God," and He bestows it in answer to prayer; and if to the prayer of faith nothing can be denied that is in harmony with the will of God, that will apply to the Christian ministry, the most essential requisite of which is a spirit of dependance and of prayer.

Thus, then, we must pursue our course—with prudence, with diligence, with patience, with prayer; seeking to "give no offence"—not "in anything," either by word or by deed.

II. And all, in the second place, "that the ministry be not blamed." A very few minutes will comprehend what I have yet to say.

"That the ministry be not blamed:"—neither the minister, nor his ministration, nor ministers generally, nor the ministry itself. You cannot well separate these things; if we suffer blame, all, more or less, suffer it also; and if the minister be blamed, the ministry is damaged. If there be obliquity in the moral conduct of a man, his ministrations will be injured; and the delinquencies of the one minister will, to a certain extent, secure an injurious influence upon all. Men are very far from discriminating in these matters; they are ready to exclaim—"They are all alike, and you may judge of the institution by the men who minister in it." But the ministry is "not to be blamed."

And it is to be regretted, that there is perhaps too much disposition to blame the ministry, not merely on the part of our opponents and men of the world, but even among those of whom, by reason of their professed attachment

to it, we have a right to expect better things. Oh! if there be a slander—if there be a tale—if there be a report against a minister—where does it find a freer circulation, or a swifter flight, than in what is called the religious world? Alas! alas! for us! Here is a sense in which, as it regards ministers, it may be said with truth—"The worst foes are they of their own house."

And it is really marvellous on what different grounds men are disposed to blame the ministry; and arbitrary and capricious, after all, are their censure and their praise. One man admires his minister—he is so hard a student; another thinks it would be better if he were a little less in his study, and a little more among his people. One man would have a minister wholly devoted to his own pastorate, and never step beyond its limits; another would have him render service to the cause of Christ at large, and devote a portion of his talents and his time to the management or the advocacy of the great institutions of the day. Some ministers are blamed, because they have too little public spirit, and others are blamed, because they have too much; nay, the same man shall be blamed by different persons, on both accounts.

'But is it possible,' you say, 'amidst such convictions of duty and propriety, opposed to each other—is it possible to avoid giving blame? is it possible to escape censure?' Perhaps not altogether; perhaps there never was a man that did; and are we better than our fathers? But the very circumstance that we are thus exposed to observation, and thus liable to blame, should put us on our guard, that there may be in us the least possible occasion for such censure; for after all, if the ministry be blamed, the most serious consequences must ensue.

If the ministry be blamed, the adorable Founder of the institution is dishonoured; and men, by the contempt and scorn with which they regard the ministry, will seem to say that in it He has been the author of an inefficient and worthless thing.

If the ministry be blamed, the minister must suffer. His influence for good will in that proportion be diminished; he will lose the reward of his work; his own personal acceptance and safety may be brought into painful suspicion and doubt; souls may perish through his negligence, his indiscretion, or his folly; and if he himself is saved at last, it may be only "so as by fire."

If the ministry be blamed, the honour of the church is sullied; its prosperity is impeded; serious impediments are thrown in the way of such as may be meditating upon the important step of seeking connection with it; the edification of many who have been accustomed to attend it, will be diminished, and its ordinances and institutions will come to be lightly esteemed, and perhaps in some cases loathed and despised.

If the ministry be blamed, infidelity will triumph, the enemy will blaspheme; and a sneering and scoffing world will exult and cry—"Aha! so we would have it!" Oh! to these unholy triumphs God forbid that we should be suffered in the smallest degree to contribute! Better that our right hand should "forget its cunning"—better that our tongues should "cleave to the roof of our mouths"—better for us if we had never been born—than that we should thus offend, and do such fearful damage to the cause we love!

Rather would I anticipate for you, my brother, a nobler course and a brighter close. May you live long, and labour faithfully and successfully for God! May seals be added to your ministry continually—and souls be given to you for your hire! May you live in the affections of your people, and be sustained by their zealous cooperation and their fervent prayers! May you see the peace of this Jerusalem, and witness its growth and increase in numbers and in piety! May every day, as you advance in life, add something to your weight of character and influence throughout this neighbourhood! "When the eye seeth you," may it "bless" you! "When the ear heareth you," may it "give witness" to you! Instead of "giving offence in anything," so "that the ministry be blamed," may you excel in all things that can promote its efficiency! May you be a pattern, an example—the very model in men's imaginations of a good minister of Jesus Christ! Until, at some far distant period, if such shall be the will of God, you shall "finish your course with joy," and lay down your life and labours in the grave, leaving behind you a name that men will love to cherish, and a memory on which their children and

their children's children will delight to dwell, whilst the adieus of earth are succeeded by the greetings of Heaven, and the grateful farewells of a sorrowing people are exchanged for the approbation of your Lord: "Well done, good and faithful servant." "Well done;" "thou hast 'fought the fight"—henceforth, and for ever, thou shalt wear the crown."

The Rev. J. STOUGHTON, (OF KENSINGTON,)

THEN DELIVERED THE FOLLOWING

Address to the Church and Congregation.

A SOLEMN charge has been addressed to your minister; he has been reminded of the responsibilities which he has to bear, and the duties he has to fulfil, in relation to the world, and the church at large, and especially in relation to you. Now as mutual relations involve mutual duties, and as these run in pairs, and on parallel lines, duties on the one side requiring that duties on the other side should keep pace with them—it is proper that you should be addressed on the subject of those obligations which are binding upon you. The pastor has listened to appropriate wise and affectionate counsels; and now it is proper for the people to enquire—"And what shall we do?" Let an apostle answer the question:—

"Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."—Philippians ii. 14—16.

The charge here given is most comprehensive and appropriate; every word tells. It is a call to the suppression of strife, the cultivation of union, and the exercise of affection and love; it enjoins a blameless, truthful and consistent deportment in all your relations as Christ's disciples, regarding yourselves as "the sons of God,"—bearing that holy name, and sustaining that elevated character, without exposing yourselves fairly to the rebukes of men, or the reproaches of conscience. And all this the apostle enforces by motives of the most solemn and impressive kind.

On this occasion, we must attempt to unfold to you the way in which you are to give practical expression to the pious dispositions and habits which are here inculcated. By cultivating these you will be nourishing the roots of rich and varied excellence in your connexion with this Christian church.

In advancing to the notice of those duties, in the consideration of which the passage I have read as a motto rather than a text will assist us, by reminding us of great principles, and by suggesting appropriate illustration, it will be desirable to urge upon you, first, and as the basis of all that is to follow, the careful and sedulous cultivation of personal piety. This has been urged upon the pastor; with no less propriety do we urge it upon the people.

As a Christian church you profess to be a society of believing and faithful men. Without piety you have no business in a Christian church. You are like rough unhewn materials placed among the polished stones, (those marvellous stones instinct with life,) which constitute the Lord's spiritual temple. You are like so much hay and stubble, mixed up with the gold and silver, and other precious things. You are out of your place in the Christian church—your unfitness for the station you occupy may be undiscovered by your fellow-men, but there is One who knows and marks your true character and condition, whose eye detects at a glance the heterogeneous elements which the builders of the church, either through carelessness, or want of skill, or that inability to discern the secrets of the heart which the wisest feel, have been striving to cement with the stones which God himself has dug out of the quarry of nature, and formed and fashioned for the living temple by His own mighty Spirit; and that all-seeing One will at length return to discern between the righteous and the wicked, between the worthless and the vile, when he will separate the false professor from the sterling Christian, and will sweep away all that is

hypocritical and unhallowed out of His church, and throw it among the moral refuse of the universe. Piety—sincere, humble, earnest piety—is essential to your characters as members of a Christian church, and if any one here feels at this moment an accusing and condemning conscience stirring within him, a conscience that accuses him of carelessness or duplicity in so momentous a matter as that of joining a Christian church, let him remember that in the eye of Heaven he is a marked man ; and if he do not by timely repentance and faith become possessed of the requisites for church fellowship, which he ought to have had at first, the mark of God's righteous displeasure will cleave to him through eternity, as a presumptuous intruder into the temple on earth—and from the temple in heaven he will be everlastingly shut out, as unfitted for its work and worship.

While piety is necessary to the consistent maintenance of a Christian profession under any circumstances, may I be permitted to observe, that it is peculiarly requisite in the members of congregational churches, in order to the maintenance of our principles, and the working out of our system ? Congregationalism, devolving (as it does) so much on the people, so much of power, so much of responsibility, requires, more than any system, that every man who adopts it, should cultivate largely the spirit of personal religion. For the prosperity, nay, even the prolonged existence of congregational churches, in anything like a state of order, individual piety is essential. Let our churches be made up mainly or in any considerable proportion of ungodly men, and they are likely to become fierce democracies ; the uncontrolled passions of ungovernable nature raging among them, like demons that no chains can bind, tearing to pieces the whole ecclesiastical framework of the system, and scattering it to the winds of heaven.

And further : Congregationalism is but a means to an end. It is not to be maintained simply for its own sake—it is to lead to something further, higher, better, holier than itself. The moral purity of the church, as the light, the joy, the salvation of the world—the efficient discharge of the missionary office, by the special instruction of mankind, their guide to truth, to holiness, and to God—the conversion of the human family to the discipleship of Christ, and the diffusion of God's glory through a darkened world, these are the sublime ends for which the congregational system is framed and fitted, and without reference to which the system itself is of little worth. Let it be kept in perfect order ; but if it be not worked for the accomplishment of these heaven-appointed purposes, it is reduced to a mere piece of machinery, fit for a museum or a show-room—worth looking at indeed—a specimen of ingenious contrivance, but nothing more.

Our system must be worked out, or we may as well abandon it ; but oh ! to work it out, what wisdom—what integrity—what faith—what humility—what devotion—what zeal—what love—are requisite ! Our system, we may add, is but an instrument—not a motive power. The voluntary system resolves itself into the absence of coercion—Christian professors are just left to act according to their conscientious convictions. Compulsion is withdrawn ; but there must be piety to create convictions which will spur on to effort—there must be something to act on the system, or it will not work. If we only get the voluntary system, without the spirit of faith, and love, and power, without the spirit of true religion, without the spirit of its divine author, we have a piece of machinery without any spring, any motive power to work it ; we have a train—a train of carriages and trucks—but no engine ;—and we may boast of our system, as much as we please, but it will stand still, and effect nothing, except as it is propelled onwards by the mighty power of heaven-born piety. Our system, brethren, bears a direct relation to the piety of its supporters ; and this I hold to be one great recommendation of it,—personal spiritual religion is every thing to us—thorough-going Christian principle, the constraining love of Christ, can alone evoke the energies of voluntarism. The spirit of the living creatures must be in the wheels ; where the spirit goes, they will go—where it stands they will stand—when it is lifted up, they will be lifted up,—for the spirit of the living creatures is in the wheels.

The cultivation of piety, then, as Christians and congregationalists, is your first grand duty. This prepares for, and is the spring and life of all others.

Now we have looked at the foundation, the root of all you have to do—and in entering upon a more detailed view of your duties as members of this church, I think they will be found to branch off in the following directions.—

I. The duty you owe to the great Head of the church, in relation to the man whom you now recognize as your pastor.

I carefully express it thus, because it is proper for you to remember, that, while the duties we are now about to enforce relate to our brother, properly speaking, they are duties owing to God; though man be the object to which they refer. God is the authority by which they are binding. Rightly discharged, they will not terminate on him, but they will touch him with comforts and blessings as they rise upward to God with acceptance and favour. In this matter "do all things without murmurings and disputings," readily, cheerfully, lovingly; be "blameless and sincere," without rebuke from God or man, a pattern to all churches, of consistent and christian conduct towards the man of God, whom in God's name you have received as your shepherd and bishop.

1. Love him, as the man whom you have chosen, for he has not been palmed upon you by a secular patron, or appointed by a presbytery; he has not been sent down to you by letters from Her Majesty, accompanied by the summons of a fictitious *congé d'elire*, to be followed by the farce of confirmation, of which such notable examples have been afforded of late. Thank God, we are free from all that; your minister has been elected by the voluntary unbiassed suffrages of the people. Love him, then, as the man whom God has given to you, in accordance with your choice, and in answer to your prayers. Love him, as the man who devotes himself to your welfare, who feels it his duty to spend and be spent in your service, and who makes it his grand aim, to present every one of you faultless in Christ Jesus. Love him, as the man who loves you, whose heart beats with affectionate concern for your welfare, and whose sympathies gush forth toward you in an ever flowing stream. This duty of loving your minister lies at the foundation of all the other duties you owe him. Where this is wanting, mere outward attention is a worthless and unwelcome form, and when this is cultivated, all which is requisite to be done by you for his comfort and happiness will follow as the natural result.

2. Hear him; and do it candidly. Ministers are often far more sensible of their own defects, than their people can be. The duties of the ministerial office, you must acknowledge, are of no easy character. To preach so often on subjects which, though various, have a general resemblance, and to furnish from time to time, if not new arguments, yet new illustrations, modes of expression, and methods of appeal—to do this year after year before the same people—and in the present day, when on the one hand the increased intelligence, and may I not add, the craving curiosity after the novel, the original, and the striking, on the part of our congregations, make acceptable preaching more difficult than ever: and when, on the other hand, the pastoral and public demands on the minister's time, in the shape of conducting and animating all kinds of benevolent agencies are becoming most oppressive and engrossing; under such circumstances to keep up a style of interesting preaching, requires mental, to say nothing of bodily vigour, of no ordinary description. If I were preaching to my own people, I should say, wonder not if we are sometimes tame, dull and uninteresting; we cannot always preach alike; I wish most heartily we could. Oh! were you acquainted with our feelings sometimes as we enter the pulpit; our sense of insufficiency, our want of mental elasticity, our physical languor, our religious depression, our jaded spirits, our thousand cares, our deep discouragements, arising from the unimpressiveness of some minds whom we address, added perhaps, sometimes, to the known distaste of others for our style and manner of preaching altogether; if you knew all this, it would be utterly impossible for you not to hear us with candour and kindness.

Hear your pastor regularly. You have chosen him as your instructor, and have therefore become his pupils. You call upon him to teach—this supposes that you are ready to come to school to learn. You expect him at the appointed time in the pulpit; and this implies that you at the same time should be in the pew—nothing short of some very good reason can excuse your absence. One knows not on what principle to account for the conduct of some persons, with regard to their minister, and their acknowledged place of worship; sometimes they are there—sometimes not there; to-day they come—next Sunday they are missing. This morning you see them in their place; to-night you look for them in vain. Now this at least is certain, that the mysterious movements of people of this class greatly depress the minister's spirit, and discourage his efforts. The sight of vacant pews, which ought to have

been filled—or pews occupied by strangers, instead of the persons over whom the pastor's heart especially yearns, and for whom he may have prepared some particular message, has not unfrequently spoiled a good sermon; and thus the absentees have, at the same time, deprived themselves of benefit, pained their pastor's heart, and injured their fellow-members to an incalculable extent.

Hear him devoutly. Pray for him before you come—and pray for him while you are here. What a relief to a pastor's mind to know that he has a share—a large share in his people's supplications! What blessings does he expect to receive in answer to such intercessions! He is engaged in a conflict. He is a soldier of the cross. He is fighting with the powers of the world and the princes of hell. Be to him what Moses was to Israel. Lift up your hands in prayer. Keep them lifted up, till the sun of life goes down on him or on you, and the evening of death either removes you far away from the scene of strife, or sees him returning home in triumph from the battle.

3. Respect his official authority.

"Remember them that have the rule over you; submit yourselves—for they watch for your souls." This means something. While, on the one hand, the most absurd notions have been entertained of ministerial authority, and it has been deemed the result of a mysterious power handed down from age to age in the apostolical succession—the creation of an undefinable influence, hallowing every one, no matter whom, who has received the mystic grace from prelatial hands;—on the other hand, some have gone so far as to divest ministers of all sacred official authority, and have considered them simply in the light of speaking brethren, or chairmen of a Christian club. Thus, while some have exaggerated, others have annihilated the influence of the ministry, as recognised in the Scriptures. Now ministers, clearly, are appointed to rule over the churches in the name of Christ. Not to legislate, but to execute the laws which Christ has revealed; not to coerce, but to exert a moral influence which every good man will feel himself bound to respect; not to utter their own fulminations, but to expound and apply the decisions of the Bible; not to tyrannize over the consciences of men, but to speak the truth in love. The ministerial authority, such as the Scripture recognizes, be it observed, is such as only the Christian can understand, such as only the Christian will feel, such as only the Christian will be disposed to obey. The respect paid to such authority will depend on the state of the heart. If your piety be of the right stamp, you will feel it your duty and your privilege to be subject to him who has been appointed over you in the Lord; to bow to the administration of the law by his hands; to refrain from all opposition to the legitimate exercise of his pastoral authority; to do all things which he enjoins upon you by scriptural warrant, "without murmurings and disputings," "that you may be blameless and inoffensive, the sons of God without rebuke;" remembering always that to be unruly in the church is to incur the displeasure of the King of Zion—that to walk disorderly is to subject yourselves to the stroke of that sword of excision—that spiritual sword, which, though it pierces not through the hard scales, and the tough skin of arrogance, pride and obstinacy, will inflict a wound on the humble and sensitive mind "which no skill can heal, and no ointment mollify."

4. Supply your pastor's temporal wants. Ministerial support is fixed by the apostle upon equitable grounds. It is matter of right, not of charity—a debt, not a donation. "The labourer is worthy of his hire"—the keeper of a vineyard, the shepherd of a flock, are deserving of remuneration—and so are ministers. It does not, my brethren, rest with you, to support your pastor or not, as you please; to give or withhold your contributions, just as you like; but you are stringently obliged by the law of Christ, to minister to him your carnal things, in return for his ministration of spiritual things. Nor is this support to be doled out after a niggardly fashion. "Have we not power," asks Paul, "to lead about a sister or wife, as well as other apostles?" by which I apprehend he meant that such support as might be needful for his family, as well as for himself, was his indubitable right, his legitimate claim. And, when, in another place, he lays down as a pastoral qualification, that the bishop be "given to hospitality," that surely implies that the people are to furnish the bishop with such resources, as will enable him at once to be hospitable and honest. But all this will "be done without murmurings and disputings," if love be the law that regulates your contributions; and though

the revenues of your bishop will never be equal to those of my Lord of London, or his Grace of Canterbury, yet they will be ample enough to supply his wants, and to promote his comfort too.

II. The second great branch of your duties relates to this church, of which you are members.

1. And here the passage I have read presents an exhortation to union. The caution against murmurings and disputings, is in effect a call to maintain "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." There must not only be the absence of strife, but the presence of love. In some churches there may be no "murmurings and disputings," simply because there is no activity, vigour, and life. The calmness is the calmness of death—the peace the peace of the grave. The only kind of union really of worth in a Christian church, is a union of loving hearts—of souls quickened by the Spirit of God and throbbing with heaven roused sympathies—a union which excludes not variety—a union in which the dead in trespasses and sins can have no fellowship. Go into a museum of natural curiosities, where dried and stiffened plants, and stone-encrusted fossils are arranged with great precision and perfect uniformity, and there you have a type of some churches, where all things are done "decently and in order;" "murmurings and disputings" are never known. And then visit the scenes of Lebanon to which the prophet Hosea points,—and see the lilies adorning the valleys—the cedars crowning the hill-tops—the olives skirting the sides—the corn patching here and there the swelling slopes—and the vines creeping in beautiful strips over the rocky ledges, all full of life and breathing forth their balmy fragrance—a scene rich in variety, yet perfectly harmonious, because the Lord is as the dew unto Israel; and there you have the picture of a living and spiritually united church. Those who are distinguished by the milder virtues, the gentler forms of Christian excellence, may be compared to the delicate lily—and those who exhibit moral elevation of character, and robust endurance, and lasting vigour, may be likened to the storm-defying cedar—and those who are full of vivacity and freshness, may be said to grow like the vivacious olive—and those who are lowly and humble, and yet fruitful Christians, may be described under the similitude of corn—and such fragile spirits as cling for support to other minds, seeking their strength in Christian friendship and sympathy, may be aptly figured by the creeping, dependent vine; yet all are combined and united—without envy, jealousy, murmuring.

The church abounds in moral varieties, one person possessing what another lacks. It is vain to wish that all should be fashioned according to the same type. For all to be alike vigorous, alike gentle, alike cheerful, alike active,—that all should think alike, judge alike, feel alike, on all points—it would not be the unity of life and nature. There is beauty in diversity, for beauty is opposed to monotonous sameness, as well as to disorder. There is strength in diversity, for strength is the result of the harmonious combination of many elements. There is perfection to be gathered out of diversity, the only perfection that exists under heaven, for in no one individual can there be found the aggregate of all excellence. And from the combination of these various individuals in a church, (all centres of life,) there springs the noblest union. For every one will acknowledge without hesitation, that the highest unity, the most perfect universality is that which comprehends, combines, and reconciles the utmost fullness of diversities. Then have we union, when, as in the church at Jerusalem, with men and women of different characters, ages, habits, tastes, and natural disposition, there is but one heart and one mind—the living all-pervading heart and mind of love. In such a church, while there will be differences of judgment and opinion, freely expressed, fully canvassed, there will be a grand harmony of affection and will, and all things will "be done without murmurings and disputings."

2. We have an exhortation to consistency. "That ye may be blameless and harmless, (or sincere,) the sons of God without rebuke." Not giving the lie to your profession by the unchristian tempers in which you indulge, and the unchristian conduct which you manifest; not occasioning the enemies of the cross to speak reproachfully of you, and of the Gospel; not affording them room to say with scorn—"As to all this fuss which the people at that chapel make about their religion, I do not see that they are a whit more honest, honourable, truthful, virtuous, and amiable than their neighbours—so far from it, I think

a good many of them are not so much so." Alas! such things may justly be said with regard to some churches—let them never be said of yours.

I have been thinking,—members of churches may be divided into four classes. 1. Those who do good. 2. Those who do harm. 3. Those who do both. 4. Those who do neither. Now at least belong to the last class. At least do no harm. At least let your consistency be negative. Yet that will be a poor barren consistency! It will yield no advantage to the church, and no comfort and joy to your own souls. But the inconsistency that is positive, that is seen in fierce outbreaks of wicked temper, like the belchings of a volcano, that is seen in the violation of truth and justice, in the rending asunder the very bonds that hold society together, that is seen in malicious speaking, and cruel slander, scattering abroad fire-brands, arrows, and death, such inconsistency brings a stigma on the member, and a curse on the church, such as I pray God none of you may ever know. And remember, further, that as you have identified yourselves with this church—as you have become its members, and have brought yourselves under certain obligations in reference to it, consistency requires that you should discharge them—otherwise you will not be blameless—you will not act sincerely—you will not be exempt from rebuke. Consistency requires that you should take an interest in the affairs of this church—consistency requires that you should attend its meetings for business and for prayer—consistency requires that you should maintain its discipline—consistency requires that you should be jealous of its reputation—consistency requires that if a brother trespass against thee, thou shouldst tell him of his fault, between thee and him alone, before thou tell it to the church—consistency requires that to the utmost of your power you should be willing to contribute to the support of those well-arranged forms of Christian benevolent agency, which cluster round this church. And all this unity, affection, consistency, and devotedness you will have to exhibit "in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation"—a description applicable to the land in which we live as well as to that in which the Philippians dwelt. There is a great idea of crookedness in our times, and in our country, crookedness in legislation, crookedness in literature, crookedness in trade and commerce, crookedness in the habits, spirit, temper, and disposition of society. You are by your consistency and efforts, by drawing out the straight lines of Christianity, to demonstrate the world's crookedness, and at the same time by the same means to try as far as you can to make the crooked things straight and the rough places plain.

III. This brings us to notice the third branch of duty, which relates to the world. "Ye are to shine as lights in the world."

You will remark that this precept is an illustration of the principle that the Almighty employs intermediate agencies in the bestowment of his benefits. The object of the divine benevolence indicated here, is the bestowment of light to the minds of ignorant and unrenewed men. It is to be conveyed through a medium—Instead of pouring it at once from His own hand on the hearts of the benighted, He employs His church; he calls you to be to the moral world what the sun, moon, and stars, are to the natural world, that is, light-bearers. You will further remark, that the position here assigned to Christians, and to you, is most honourable. It makes you God's agents, representatives, mirrors in the midst of the benighted earth. "I am the light of the world," said Jesus Christ when He was on earth; now He is gone to heaven He calls on you, as it were, to stand in his place, to catch the light of His example, and the light of His truth, and the light of His love, and to pour it on the world. And you will again remark, that this office of enlightening men is not entrusted to such agency as many would have expected—At first it was not entrusted to Egyptian Priests, and the Persian Magi, and Grecian Sages, and Jewish Rabbis; and now it is not entrusted to philosophers, and legislators, and statesmen. No, churches, believers, Christ's followers, however scorned, these are the God-sent teachers of mankind—the divine illuminators of the dark earth. You will be reminded too of the striking contrast that is to be maintained between the church and the world. I look round upon the earth, and I see everywhere moral, religious, spiritual darkness. But in the church there should be light—the contrast should be visible—the light should be separated from the darkness—the Christian should be as pure as others are depraved, as spiritual as others are secular, as benevolent as others are selfish, as devout as others are careless, as much under the dominion of faith as others are under the dominion of sense. The contrast, I repeat, should be visible—visible in the family—visible in the social circle—visible in the market—visible everywhere.

You are then, you see, my brethren, to let your characters shine. As indivi-

duals you are to resemble so many floating lights, modestly and quietly sparkling over life's ocean, like stars on the bosom of the dark waters. And as a collective church you are to resemble a collection of brilliant lamps, and reflectors placed together on the top of a lighthouse.

And you are to shine by your voluntary, combined and well-organised efforts. You are to hold up, and to hold forth, the Word of life, through the medium of City, Home, Foreign, Colonial, Universal Missions. Thus, you are to resemble that noble building in the western coast of England, which rears its head aloft above the Eddystone rocks, holding up its beacon fire, to attract and guide the mariner, and bearing on its deep foundation the memorable words—"To give light and to save life." Think of your responsibility. If through your neglecting to keep the lamp burning in this moral light-house, any of your fellow-men in this vicinity, or elsewhere, should miss the way to heaven; if souls, through your neglect, I say, should founder and perish, how awful will be the blame! how heavy the condemnation that you will receive from Him who says, "All souls are Mine;" and who has commanded you to "look diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God!"

All must join in this dispensation of light. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." "As each has received the gift, so let him minister the same as a good steward." Wisdom will teach a man what good work he is fit for, and that he should do. In the church of Rome, in Paul's time, there was plenty of work done, because there was a place for every one, and every one was in his place. The lamps and reflectors for giving light to the world were well arranged. Like David's men, the people were well drilled, could keep rank, and marched in order. That church was eminently useful, shed beautiful, clear, steady light on the world, because the people attended to Paul's direction—"We being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophecy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministry; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence." They blended their lights together in one stream of radiance. That church at Rome was a model church. Every man helped according to his several ability; and I do not believe that God ever calls a man, a woman, or a child into the church, but He has some work for them to do there, some light for them to shed, some niche that he or she is fitted to occupy; only, unfortunately, some never find it out, and therefore the niche is vacant, and the person is idle, or he changes place with somebody else, attempts what he is not fit for, and thus creates all manner of confusion.

By every approved method of individual effort and social organization, man, woman and child in this church should strive to dissipate and scatter the darkness of the world, and especially of this immediate neighbourhood. Let this be a working church—throughout, from the least to the greatest, be workers. Life natural and spiritual is given to you, that you may work—that you may work for God and for souls. Work ought not to be thrown into the hands of a few. All should share in work. Let this church be a household without an idler, a hive without a drone.

May I add, that if you would be eminently useful, if you would be conspicuous lights in the world, zeal is not the only requisite—piety the only qualification? A ship will not sail without wind; but it will make a sorry voyage if it has only the gale to guide it.

God hath not given us, says Paul, "the spirit of fear, but of power, of love and of a sound mind." A triple endowment that, of the highest worth—"power," the antithesis of fear, energy of character, calm decision, resolved purpose, a spirit of independence, one that will lead a man to work alone, if others will not help him; a spirit of earnestness, a steady habit of pursuing an object; that is a spirit of "power." "Love," the apostle adds; that is, the spirit of deep compassion, genuine tenderness. "A sound mind," he further specifies; by which we understand sobriety of judgment, a clear comprehensive view of things, a power of keen discernment, of wise discretion; to use the language of an old writer—"to have wit enough to find out what's good, to eschew what's bad, and to make the best use of either." Practical wisdom; not merely the knowledge of right principles, but the knowledge of the right way of applying them. These three—love, power, and a sound mind, are the grand prerequisites for eminent usefulness. Not love alone, that makes a mere sentimentalist; not power alone, that makes a rugged character like a rock without verdure; but the two combined, love softening and giving life to power, power supporting and giving energy to love; and a sound mind added to both. We cannot be eminently useful without binding round us this triple cord

of Christian virtue. Powerless, we lack the means; cold hearted, we lack the motive; ignorant and foolish, we lack the right method. Without power, we are like a ship becalmed; without love, we are like a ship icebound; without judgment, we are "like a ship driven of the wind and tossed." The three make a vessel with sound timbers, ample canvass and a skilful pilot, and it shall make a prosperous voyage.

IV. But we must conclude with one word, as to the motive adduced by the apostle. "That I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."

That day which will reveal august scenes—the universal gathering—the presence of angels—the great white throne—the glory of the Redeemer—the terror of the lost—the burning of the world; that day when Christ will come to complete His mediatorial enterprise, to place the top-stone on the temple of redemption, to put the finishing stroke to the work of mercy, and shed upon His people the crowning blessings of salvation, breaking off the last fetters of corruption from their bodies, and crushing beneath His feet the enemy of their souls. At that day, the relationship between pastor and people will be recognized. Civil, social, domestic bonds are overlooked. Nothing is said of the meeting of kings and subjects, masters and servants, man and wife, parents and children; only the meeting of pastor and people. From the association, then, formed on this day, there arise immortal bonds of fellowship, to be recognized on that day. The parties among whom the pastor labours may be scattered; mountains may rise and oceans roll between them; some may forget the man who has instructed them, and he may never know in this world many who have received his instructions; but the responsibility of having ministered to them will always attach to him, and the responsibility of having enjoyed his ministry will always attach to them; and a Divine hand will group them together at the last day, as possessing in part a common history, and as implicated in mutual responsibilities. You and your pastor will form such a group, and when thus you meet what recollections will arise! "To rejoice in the day of Christ;" to hail the Judge's advent; to exult in His appearance, when many shall cry, "rocks, fall on us; hills, cover us;" to look around with calmness on the wreck and desolation of this vast world; to feel, as the foundations of it crackle under our feet, and its smoke goes up to Him, that we have lost nothing—oh! how unutterably sublime! That will be joy! Let my bosom remain through life a stranger to every emotion of pleasure, which temporal things can awaken; let me pass through the lowest depths of adversity and affliction; let me be reviled and persecuted, and my name be cast out as evil; let my days be darkened with the thickest clouds, and my nights be uncheered by a single star, if I may but have joy at last; if I may but be saved in the day of the Lord; if I may but have confidence before Him at His coming. So prays your minister. So prays many a one here.

Now remember, so far as your minister's joy is concerned, it is possible for you to contribute to it. If you are consistent, it will be remembered to his honor then; if you are found to have been faithful, it will afford him satisfaction then; if you hold up his hands, he will reap the fruits of your cooperation then; if you help him to save souls, they will gather round and bless him then. If you love the man of your choice, you will feel the power of this motive, and will strive to add to his usefulness now, that you may add to his joy and blessedness hereafter.

We part at the foot of the judgment-seat. Solemn place of parting! We shall soon meet round it in reality. May this thought be ever present to our minds! May it occur amidst the scenes of future pastoral intercourse between your minister and you, rendering your mutual joy deep and solemn! May he preach, may you hear with the judgment-seat in view; may it be seen as the background of all your prospects; may it produce faithfulness in him—obedience in you, and elevated piety in both. And now, my brethren, with that judgment-seat before us, in the presence of men and angels, before God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing, "I charge you, to do all things without murmuring and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless" the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom shine ye as lights of the world; holding forth the word of life, that, your pastor "may rejoice in the day of Christ, that he has not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."

The Rev. J. C. HARRISON (of Somer's Town,) concluded the Service with prayer.

PHOTOMOUNT
[AMPHLET BINDER



Manufactured by
GAYLORD BROS. Inc.
Syracuse, N. Y.
Stockton, Calif.

BX7178 .I8L9
Recognition service at Lower Street

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 00037 9182